

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
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FOR SCHAUFLE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CG, AO, NI
SUBJECT: NIGERIAN BELIEF THAT USG BEHIND MOROCCAN INTERVENTION

REF: STATE 081287

1. IT OCCURS TO US THAT MOROCCO MIGHT BE ABLE PLAY USEFUL
ROLE IN DISABUSING THE FMG OF ANY IMPRESSION IT MAY HAVE THAT
USG INSTIGATED MOROCCAN TROOP SUPPORT FOR ZAIRE. ROLE WOULD
HAVE TO BE PLAYED WITH EXTREME CARE AND SKILL. IF THERE IS
A QUESTION AS TO ADROITNESS WITH WHICH MOROCCANS COULD CARRY IT
OFF, WE WOULD PROBABLY BE BETTER OFF NOT TRYING. HOWEVER,
ASSUMING BOTH WILL AND SKILL, MOROCCANS MIGHT CONSTRUCTIVELY:

(A) TELL THE FMG THEY ACCEDDED TO MOBUTU'S REQUEST FOR TROOPS
BECAUSE OF THEIR CONCERN OVER THREAT TO TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY
OF ZAIRE AND STABILITY OF MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. THEY HOPE THAT
PRESENCE OF MOROCCAN TROOPS WILL HELP STABILIZE THE SITUATION
AND GIVE DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS A CHANCE TO SUCCEED. THEY
DO NOT WANT TO KEEP TROOPS IN ZAIRE ANY LONGER THAN NECESSRY,
ARE ANXIOUS TO MINIMIZE BLOODSHED, AND THEREFORE URGE FMG TO GET
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ON WITH ITS MEDIATION EFFORTS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

(B) IT WOULD BE IN THE PROCESS OF THIS PRESENTATION THAT GOM
MIGHT OBSERVE IN PASSING THAT IT KNEW ITS MOVE MIGHT BE UNPOP-
ULAR OR MISUNDERSTOOD IN SOME QUARTERS AND THEREFORE IT TOOK
CARE TO INFORM THE OAU AND INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS (SUCH AS) AFTER THE
DESPATCH OF TROOPS WAS UNDERWAY. EXACT WORDING OF THIS EXPLANA-

TION WOULD PRESUMABLY HINGE ON TIMING OF ACTUAL SCENARIO WITH WHICH EMBASSY LAGOS NOT FULLY FAMILIAR.

2. IF MOROCCANS CAN BE BROUGHT ALONG, THERE IS A SECOND END THAT COULD BE USEFULLY SERVED BY SUCH AN APPROACH TO FMG. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MOROCCAN REINFORCEMENTS MAY COOL MOBUTU'S INTEREST IN NIGERIAN MEDIATION EFFORTS AND IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ANGOLA. WE WOULD HOPE GOM WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTED IN EARLY WITHDRAWAL OF ITS SOLDIERS TO BE WILLING TO MAKE CLEAR TO MOBUTU THAT THE PRICE OF THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE IS HIS PROGRESS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ANGOLA. IF MOROCCANS COULD MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR IN THEIR PRESENTATION TO FMG AS WELL, WE RECKON IT WOULD HELP TAKE THE CURSE OFF OF MOROCCAN INTERVENTION, REDUCING AT THE SAME TIME NIGERIAN SUSPICION OF US ROLE IN THAT INTERVENTION.

3. FOLLOWING ARE VARIOUS POSSIBLE WAYS IN WHICH ABOVE APPROACH MIGHT BE MADE TO FMG. WE LIST THEM IN ROUGH AND TENTATIVE DESCENDING ORDER OF MERIT:

(A) FOREIGN MINISTER LARSKI SENDS A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO GARBA. THIS COULD BE DELIVERED BY A MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR IN EUROPE (OR A SPECIAL EMISSARY FROM RABAT) WHO INTERCEPTS GARBA AT SOME POINT DURING HIS PRESENT EASTERN EUROPEAN SWING. (IF GARBA RETURNS TO NIGERIA VIA LONDON AS IS HIS USUAL PRACTICE, THE MESSAGE COULD BE DELIVERED BY THE MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR THERE. WITH GARBA REPORTEDLY NOT TO RETURN TO LAGOS BEFORE APRIL 21, HOWEVER, A LONDON RENDEZVOUS OPPORTUNITY WOULD PRESUMABLY NOT PRESENT ITSELF FOR A WEEK. WE ASSUME ANY SUCH MESSAGE SHOULD
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MOVE MORE QUICKLY THAN THAT; ONCE THE "STALKING HORSE" STORY STARTS TO CIRCULATE, NIGERIANS MAY ACCEPT IT UNLESS PREVIOUSLY PERSUADED THAT IT DIDN'T HAPPEN THAT WAY.)

(B) LARAKI COULD HIMSELF OFFER TO MEET WITH GARBA IN EUROPE. (IN VIEW OF MOROCCO'S QUESTIONABLE STANDING WITH THE FMG AND IN THE OAU GENERALLY, WE HAVE RULED OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LARAKI INVITING GARBA TO STOP IN RABAT ON HIS WAY HOME. WE BELIEVE GARBA WOULD BE HESITANT TO DO THIS. IN ADDITION, THE AFOREMENTIONED ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF SPEEDY ACTION DISCOURAGE THIS OPTION.)

(C) THE KING SENDS A MESSAGE TO OBASANJO. IF THIS COURSE WERE ADOPTED, MOROCCO MIGHT CONSIDER SENDING A SPECIAL EMISSARY TO LAGOS. MOROCCO'S AMBASSADOR HERE APPEARS TO HAVE FEW CONTACTS, IS A DEAD-IN-THE WATER PERSONALITY, AND DOES NOT IMPRESS US AS A GOOD CHOICE FOR THIS MISSION.

(D) THE MOROCCAN SC REPRESENTATIVE DELIVERS THE MESSAGE TO NIGERIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, HARRIMAN, WHEN THE LATTER RETURNS FROM

NEW DELHI. IN OUR VIEW THIS IS A LESS SATISFACTORY OPTION THAN THE MORE DIRECT LARAKI/GARBA OR HASSAN/OBASANJO CHANNELS.

(E) GOM CALLS IN NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN RABAT. THIS METHOD RISKS DELAY IN TRANSMISSION OF MESSAGE AND SUBJECTS IT TO INTERPRETATION BY NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR IN RABAT, WHO IS UNKNOWN QUANTITY TO US.

4. WE REITERATE OUR CAUTION THAT IF THE MOROCCANS MISHANDLE THEIR PRESENTATION, THE CURE MAY MAKE THE ILLNESS WORSE. THIS CALLS FOR THE BEST EFFORT THE MOROCCANS CAN MOUNT. WE FAVOR THE LARAKI- GARBA MESSAGE TO BE DELIVERED TO GARBA IN EUROPE BY MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR, EMISSARY OR LARAKI HIMSELF. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH SEEK EMBASSY RABAT VIEWS ON RELATIVE MERITS AND FEASIBILITY THESE ALTERNATIVES.
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